

Helena JSEC Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2013

Members Present:

Alan Thompson
Cathy Wood
Chris Beebe
Dave Laber
Deb Chouinard
Sandy Hamlin
Tom Antonick

Helena College University of Montana
Student Assistance Foundation
Shodair Children's Hospital
Helena Job Service
Helena Job Service
Helena Job Service
Office of Public Instruction

January Minutes: Cathy requested any changes or corrections to the minutes. Deb noted that there was a change to the agenda. Our speaker from Unemployment Insurance is spelled Blunn, instead of Blom. Alan motioned to approve the minutes and agenda (with change), and Deb made a second.

Treasurer Report: Sandy reported for Darlene. The JSEC bank account has a balance of \$6,254.37, including the last Business Over Breakfast deposit of \$242.26. Cathy inquired about the refrigerator donation that Deb had sent an e-mail about. The request was for \$350.00 to \$400.00 donation to provide a refrigerator for Helena Job Service in lieu of the 'Appreciation Breakfast'. At the time, Deb wasn't aware that the breakfast normally runs \$200.00 to \$300.00, depending on the menu. She was concerned that Job Service not take advantage. She noted that the refrigerator they were looking at was around \$500.00 because the smaller, less expensive ones don't have enough room to store the food and beverages for the special events they sponsor (they are still checking everywhere for the best price). Job Service currently has a used fridge that was donated to us, but it sounds like it is ready to blow up, so we're not sure how long that one will last. Deb requested the \$400.00 rather than the \$350.00. Cathy thought the events Job Service sponsors are in line with what she feels JSEC is for. A motion was made by Tom to approve \$400.00 and Alan made a second.

Manager's Report: Deb noted that as of April 1st, Helena Job Service had 5,755 folks registered with our office. At this particular time, it is down a bit. At the same time, we had 330 jobs, which statistically means that each applicant would have to turn in 15.6 applications to get a job. The door count went down in March to about 200. This is about 50 less a day than we have been seeing. Job Service has a new Work Experience person at the front desk. Her name is Vicky Tuer from CTI (Career Training Institute). She started last Wednesday and is doing a really good job, picking up very quickly. Deb said it really helps staff to have another person at the front so they are not being pulled from their other duties.

The job fair with ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) is still moving forward. Deb and Carol met with them last week and are trying to get Carroll College for the 16th of August, but they have volleyball practice and aren't sure if that can be changed yet. Phil Osborne is going to try to check with someone at Helena College. Alan gave a couple names that may be able to help with the scheduling there. The committee will be looking at other dates as well. They are hoping if it doesn't cost as much as allocated, they will not have to charge employers at all for a vendor spot. They really would like to have it be a well-attended event.

Scholarship Update: Sandy sent out the notification letters to our winner, and non-winners, for the Mike Bullock Memorial Scholarship. She hasn't heard back from the winner yet to see if she is going to attend the reception, which is right around the corner (May 8th) since we changed the date to accommodate the SHRM Conference. If we don't hear back from her, we will just have a regular

meeting instead of the reception. Sandy was approached last year with a suggestion that we serve something different than cake for the reception. Options were offered.

The young lady that won last year mentioned to Sandy that she is taking a summer class that costs around \$500.00. Alan said the cost sounded about right. After discussion, all agreed that as long as she is enrolled in that class, we can give her the second-year scholarship for that instead of waiting until fall.

Unemployment Insurance: Deb introduced Sharon Blunn, Supervisor of the Unemployment Division, Quality Control Unit. Members introduced themselves to Sharon. The attached handout shows the information discussed at the meeting. Some additional highlighted questions and comments are as follows:

- Workload for UI is very heavy right now.
- Job attached means the claimant must have the potential of returning to 30 hours of work, and once employed the expectation of returning to 40 hours of work.
- Before being disqualified for work refusal, unemployment must consider whether the work was suitable. This means the wage must be in the labor market medium range. Also, they can broaden their work search scope, but are not disqualified for not applying for jobs completely out of their field (for example, an electrician refusing a daycare job).
- What should an employer do if an applicant refuses employment and they suspect they are drawing unemployment benefits?
 - If you have reason to believe a claimant is receiving benefits they aren't entitled to receive, please contact the Claims Investigation Unit at (406) 444-1709 or go online at uid.dli.mt.gov/fraud/reportfraud.asp.
- When an employee does something off duty that results in termination, the employer must prove it is detrimental to their business or they will probably receive unemployment benefits.
- If an employee requests a reduction in hours from full time to part time, and the reduction lasts for six weeks, that would be considered a working agreement and they would probably qualify for partial benefits. If they could have remained employed full time, they may be disqualified. If they have a reduction of 20% or more in wages or hours and make an attempt to maintain, they will probably get benefits.
- If an employer discharges an employee and does not respond to the request for information from UI, the employee will be allowed benefits. This is a fairly new law. The employer has 8 days to respond. Unemployment will work with you on this if you are proactive about it.
- Employers must tell employees if there is an issue that may result in termination, and give them a reasonable opportunity to correct the problem (exception: if it not correctable- like embezzlement). Sharon suggested a good policy manual, and following it, helps.
- If dismissed because of drug and alcohol testing, be sure the testing follows state and federal law.
- Employers can call unemployment to get information on the claimant's statement. Some employers are being told they can't have that information. Although it is no longer sent automatically, employers can have that information.

Hidden Agenda: Sandy said that she contacted three new potential members whose names she received from the Career Fair. We discussed a business tour for our June meeting.

Adjourned.